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Collaborative actions in supervision meetings

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Abstract

In this chapter, we study face-to-face meetings between students and supervisors, where the focus of the meeting is supervision of academic writing. The aim of the study is to examine how students and supervisors in Sweden and Finland collaborate in order to improve the students' texts and to discuss academic writing. Using conversation analysis, we study video-recorded, naturally occurring interactions. Our analysis shows that supervisors and students perform a variety of collaborative actions, initiated by both students and supervisors, such as co-construction of turns, recycling of co-participants' turns, telling of second stories, and joint production of text units. The findings of the study highlight that participation roles in the institutional interactions studied are complex and dynamic, and that the combination of both the students' subject expertise and the supervisors' academic expertise enable mutual understanding of the texts and topics under discussion.

Introduction

This chapter deals with collaborative actions of students and supervisors in the supervision of academic writing. Using conversation analysis (CA) as a method, the chapter examines how students and supervisors collaborate in naturally occurring face-to-face supervision meetings. The current study aims to contribute to an enhanced understanding of supervisory interaction, and to yield new insights into the development of academic literacy practices in higher education.

Academic supervision is an essential part of higher education, as it aims at enhancing some of the most central intended learning outcomes, i.e. core academic skills including subject expertise and academic writing. Supervision meetings are institutional interactions where students and supervisors meet face to face in order to improve these core skills. Interaction in supervision has been studied from various approaches, often from the perspective of giving and receiving advice (e.g. Vehviläinen, 2001; Waring, 2007; Henricson & Nelson, 2017), and in this setting, unidirectional advice-

giving is a crucial part of the interaction. However, supervision meetings also open up for student participation. The meetings are supposed to be formed in a way that allows and encourages students to participate actively (see e.g. Norberg Brorsson & Ekberg, 2012; Lindblom-Ylänne, Nevgi, Lindfors, Londen, Löfström & Mickwitz, 2016). As Vehviläinen (2009) shows, student participation can, for example, be initiated when a student asks a question or introduces a new topic. Waring's study on tutor-student interactions (2007) also highlights that it is possible for students to decrease the inherent asymmetry between the participants, for example through the ways in which they respond to advice given by the tutors.

As a point of departure, we move beyond an analysis based on pre-defined roles of supervisors as experts and advice-givers and students as non-experts and advice-receivers. Instead, we investigate the interplay and collaboration between the participants, with the aim to examine how collaborative actions between students and supervisors temporally and sequentially unfold in the interactions. We address the following two research questions: 1) How are collaborative actions accomplished in supervision meetings?, and 2) How do students and supervisors jointly find ways to improve the students' texts?

The paper is structured as follows: We begin with a short introduction of previous research and key concepts, and continue with a presentation of our data and our methodological approach. We then present our analysis, and conclude with a discussion of our findings.

Academic supervision: advice-giving, knowledge, and learning

The institutional meetings in focus concern supervision of academic writing based on texts produced by students. During the meetings, the participants typically go through the supervisor's prepared and spontaneous comments on the student's work, with the aim of improving both the text and the academic writing abilities of the student. Advice-giving is an essential part of these interactions (see e.g. Henricson & Nelson, 2017), but the setting also encourages student participation, for example by opening up slots for students' questions (see e.g. Vehviläinen, 2009; Vehviläinen, Pyhältö, Lindblom-Ylänne, Löfström, Nevgi & Koutaniemi, 2016, p. 360). Through their active participation, the students have the possibility to diminish the asymmetry between advice-giver and advice-receiver, e.g. by expressing their own views of the text and any revisions made by the supervisors (cf. Waring, 2007).

Through collaborative actions, the students and the supervisors orient to mutual understanding, and hence, interactionally position themselves regarding rights and access to knowledge (see ‘epistemic positioning’ e.g. in Stivers, Mondada, & Steensig, 2011; Heritage, 2012). In previous research on learning in interaction, Melander and Sahlström (2010, p. 149) state that epistemic positioning is always present and also made relevant by the participants in the interaction. Melander and Sahlström (2010, p. 151) further claim that changes over time in epistemic positioning can make the processes behind learning visible. In our study, the participants explicitly negotiate the institutional roles and position themselves epistemically, as will be demonstrated in the section *Participation roles*. Within the complex institutional setting that supervision of academic writing creates, we focus on the ways in which students and supervisors collaborate to reach interactional and institutional goals.

Data and methodological approach

The data consist of video-recordings of supervision meetings in universities where the language of instruction is Swedish or Finnish. The supervision meetings held in Swedish were collected in Sweden and Finland, and the meetings held in Finnish were collected in Finland.¹ The supervision meetings are provided by university faculties and language centers and carried out by senior lecturers of linguistics or language counsellors. The analysed interactions follow a pre-set agenda adapted to the institutional goal of improving students’ texts and writing abilities by discussing their texts and writing processes. In the Finnish data, the meetings are part of an examination process of a compulsory test, a so called maturity test, at the end of the undergraduate studies. The test is based on Finnish law, and passing the test demonstrates language skills required from anyone working in public administration in Finland. The meetings’ official purpose is to accept the language of the students’ texts. In order to achieve this, the supervision aims at helping in final revisions of the texts. In the Swedish data, the texts are part of longer academic essays (undergraduate/graduate level), and the supervision provides support in the ongoing text processes.

The Swedish data amount to 11 hours of recordings. In total, 15 students and 4 supervisors participate in the Swedish supervision meetings. These

¹ Swedish is the principal language in Sweden, whereas Finland has two official languages, Finnish and Swedish.

recordings were conducted within the research programme *Interaction and variation in pluricentric languages – Communicative patterns in Sweden Swedish and Finland Swedish* (funded by Riksbankens Jubileumsfond, project ID: M12-0137:1).

The Finnish data consist of approximately 10 hours of recordings, i.e. roughly the same amount of time as our Swedish data. However, the Finnish meetings are much shorter than the Swedish ones. The Finnish data include 70 meetings with 4 supervisors and 70 students. While participants in the Swedish meetings discuss longer texts and students' writing abilities more generally, participants in the Finnish meetings discuss texts consisting of one-page abstracts with the purpose of primarily providing feedback on the acceptability of these shorter texts (for more details about the Finnish data, see Mäntynen, 2018).

We have analysed our data using conversation analysis (CA)². Conversation analysis is a systematic approach to the investigation of social interaction as it emerges in the temporally unfolding interaction (Hakulinen, 1989). It aims at discovering the practices that people use when accomplishing actions in everyday life (Sidnell, 2013). The analytic focus is on action; particularly on actions accomplished not by individual speakers but by co-participants together (Mondada, 2016). An essential focus in CA is the temporal organisation of interaction: how co-participants manage actions sequentially, on a moment-by-moment basis (Schegloff, 2007). As a result of the temporal organisation, the circumstances in which participants construct their actions change all the time (Heritage, 1984). Every turn in a conversation is both produced and interpreted locally (Schegloff & Sacks, 1973). Furthermore, every turn displays an interpretation of the previous turn(s) and simultaneously creates a context for the next turn(s). Therefore, the context in the conversational interaction is seen as profoundly dynamic (Heritage, 1984). Along with the “embodied turn” in CA-studies (see Nevile, 2015), more attention has been paid to the simultaneity of the co-participants' actions (see e.g. Goodwin, 2000; Mondada, 2016). CA-studies typically analyse naturally occurring interactions, audio or video recorded in situations not arranged for research purposes.

² For a Swedish introduction to CA-research, see Norrby, 2014 [1996]; for a Finnish, see Stevanovic and Lindholm, 2016.

- 08 STU: aa det e ju jättebra
yeah that's PRT very good
- 09 SUP: om vi tittar på sida på åtta nu ha- du kan ju (0.3)
if we look at page at eight now ha- you can PRT (0.3)
- 10 tänka på å göra (1.3) °vad heter det° sidnumrering
think about doing (1.3) °what is it called° page numbering

In lines 1 and 2 the linguistic supervisor disclaims subject expertise by stating that she does not *really understand the subject* ('inte riktigt förstår ämnet'). She thereby sheds light on the complexity of the participation roles in these kinds of institutional interactions and ascribes the expertise on the subject to the student. The student responds with laughter and then, in a way, accepts the ascribed expert role by explaining how good it is to get somebody else's perspective (lines 3–4). After this meta-level talk about participation roles, initiated by the supervisor, the supervisor initiates a new sequence regarding *page numbering* ('sidnumrering', lines 9–10). This kind of meta-talk about epistemic issues and expertise show how the participation roles are negotiated in situ. In the studied supervision meetings, the student's and supervisor's combined expertises and the interactionally negotiable participation roles offer a flexible frame for different kinds of collaborative actions.

Analysis of collaborative actions

In this section, we discuss how collaboration between students and supervisors is manifested in our data. Through detailed analyses of selected examples from our Swedish and Finnish data sets, we describe how students and supervisors show cooperativeness and jointly find ways to improve the students' texts, and how the students actively participate in problem solving. We present our analysis under four different headings: *Co-constructing utterances*, *Recycling and reformulating each other's turns*, *Telling second stories* and *Doing collaborative writing*.

Co-constructing utterances

A basic claim in CA concerns turn-taking: conversation is carried on turn by turn, and turn transition is systematic and coordinated around possible completion points (Sacks, Schegloff, & Jefferson, 1974). A special case of turn-transition are so called co-constructions (Helasvuo, 2004), also discussed e.g. as *collaboratively constructed sentences*, *collaboratively produced turn-constructive units* or *jointly produced TCUs* (Lerner, 1991,

p. 444–445, 1996, p. 239), *collaboratively built utterances* (Sacks 1992a, p. 144–147, p. 651–655, 1992b, p. 57–60, p. 82–83), and *collaborative productions* (Szczepek Reed, 2006). In co-constructions, one participant initiates a turn, and another produces the completion. According to Sacks, co-constructions are profoundly social and manifest the collaborative nature of interaction (1992a, p. 147).

In this section, we discuss two cases of co-construction, where one of the participants completes the other's ongoing turn. In example 2, the supervisor and the student discuss whether a recurrent term in the text should be written in lower-case letters or upper-case letters. The example illustrates how the supervisor completes an utterance initiated by the student.

Example 2. Co-constructed utterance initiated by a student (Finland Swedish)

- 01 SUP: å så har vi de här me (.) TERM1 å där
 and then we have this with (.) TERM1 and there
- 02 används ju (1.1) båda di här skrivsätten
 both ways of writing are used PRT
- 03 STU: mm ((nickar))
 mm ((nods))
- 04 (0.5)
- 05 SUP: å de här de e de här som till exempel Svenska skrivregler
 and this here that's this that for example the book on Swedish writing conventions
- 06 ju rekommenderar [me lite små bokstäver
 PRT recommend with small lower-case letters
- 07 STU: [mm ((nickar))
 mm ((nods))
- 08 SUP: men sen har du ju de här å du har också TERM2
 but then you have this and you also have TERM2
- 09 så då kan de hända att du kör me dom här i alla fall
 so then it might be that you go for these anyhow

- 10 fö [de finns int i S[AOL]
 cause it's not in SAOL ((Swedish dictionary))
- 11 STU [mm [för att de] ska bli då ((lyfter huvudet, ser på
 handledaren, handledaren nickar))
 mm so that it will become then ((raises her head, gazes at SUP, SUP nods))
- 12 SUP: enhet[ligt
 uniform
- 13 STU: [jä p[recis ((vänder blicken tillbaka till texten))
 yeah exactly ((returns gaze to text))
- 14 SUP: [mm
 mm

In line 1, the supervisor introduces a new topic, i.e. how a frequently used term should be written, after which she gives general recommendations on the spelling (lines 5–6). In lines 8–10, the supervisor adds a recommendation that deviates from the general rule, but that is more adapted to this particular text. In overlap with the final parts of the supervisor's utterance, the student initiates an upshot of and a motivation for the advice given by the supervisor, by lifting her gaze towards the supervisor and saying: *so that it will become then* ('för att det ska bli då', line 11). The student does not explicitly search for a word or ask the supervisor to fill in, but she does change her bodily posture and gaze, as she turns away from the text and faces the supervisor. The supervisor maintains her gaze and bodily focus on the text in front of them, but nods towards the end of the student's utterance (line 11). Before the student has finished the utterance, the supervisor completes it with *uniform* ('enhetligt', line 12), thus describing how the text will be if she follows the advice given by the supervisor. In slight overlap with this suggestion, the student acknowledges and accepts the completion offered by the supervisor (line 13). By co-constructing the utterance, the supervisor and the student display joint understanding of why the spelling needs to be adjusted.

Example 3 is another example of co-construction, although here the roles are reversed. The transcript starts in the middle of an advice-giving sequence on how to refer to electronic sources.

Example 3. Co-construction initiated by a supervisor (Finland Swedish)

- 01 SUP: ibland så är de så att sånt som finns på nätet som pdf (.)
sometimes it's the case that stuff that's on the web as pdf (.)
- 02 finns också som tryckt eller den har ett sån här ISB-nummer alltså den
also exists in print or it has one of these ISB-numbers that is it
- 03 (0.7)
- 04 STU: °ja°
yes
- 05 SUP: e liksom utgiven
is like published
- 06 (0.2)
- 07 SUP: å då ska man hantera det som en (1.8) int som en webbsida
and in that case one should treat it as a (1.8) not as a web page
- 08 utan som som en
but as as a
- 09 STU: *som en trycksak*
as a printed source
- 10 SUP: [okej]
okay
- 11 STU: [°just de°
°right°

In lines 1–2, the supervisor tells the student that electronic sources are sometimes also printed in a more official manner, with publication identifications etc. The student acknowledges this information with a quietly produced *yes* (line 4), after which the supervisor specifies which reference practice to apply (line 5). In line 7, she then goes on to invoke what this implies for references to such sources, *and in that case one should treat it as a* ('å då ska man hantera det som en'), but stops mid-turn and pauses for 1.8 seconds. Thereafter, she restarts from the opposite perspective, *not as a web site but as as a* ('int som en webbsida utan som som en', lines 7–8), but she

still does not complete the utterance. The pause, the restart, and the repeated *as* ('som'), all signal a word search in progress (see Goodwin & Goodwin, 1986). The student assists with the word search by offering a candidate solution, *as a print source* ('som en trycksak', line 9). The supervisor accepts this proposal, with *okay* ('okej') in line 10, at the same time as the student further confirms this with a quiet *right* ('just de') in line 11. They then continue discussing the topic in further detail (not included in transcript).

Examples 2 and 3 illustrate how students and supervisors complete each other's utterances, hence displaying understanding of in what direction the other participant's utterance is going (cf. Bolden, 2003). In some cases, the co-constructed utterances are initiated without any trouble displayed (as in example 2). In other cases, the co-constructions arise from problems in the ongoing turn production, where, for example, signals of a word search might function as an invitation to collaborate in the completion of the turn. As Bockgård (2004) notes, continuing a previous speaker's utterance can be a way for the speaker to show empathy, solidarity, and agreement, and hence increase the affinity with the previous speaker. Examples 2 and 3 show that this is a two-way process, as both the students and the supervisors complete each other's utterances.

Recycling and reformulating each other's turns

In this section, we analyse cases where students and supervisors repeat, recycle or reformulate each other's utterances. Repetition, discussed under different terms by different researchers, can be seen as a way to accomplish various social goals (Tannen, 1989; see also Landqvist, 2010): it keeps talk going, shows listenership, and ties one's own ideas to other's ideas. Anward (2004) describes modified recycling (*recycling with différence*) as a method of turn construction in everyday talk that is profoundly interactive and allows language continuously to emerge as a "co-constructed social fact" (p. 2). Savijärvi (2011, 2018) has investigated second language learning in a kindergarten setting, and shown that recyclings also contribute to second language learning in interaction (see also Cekaite & Aronsson, 2004). In a multilingual healthcare context, Yazdanpanah and Plejert (2017) discuss recyclings in terms of verbal, embodied, and prosodic repetition. Even if their interactional setting clearly differs from ours, it is interesting to observe how they describe recycling as a resource to establish common ground and shared interpersonal engagement. These findings correspond with the ways students and supervisors use repetition in our data. In example 4, the supervisor recycles a student's formulation:

Example 4. Recycling a student's formulation (Sweden Swedish)

01 SUP: å det det [blir inte riktigt så sammanhållet ja lite]
and it it doesn't get really that coherent yes a bit

02 STU: [trögt å läsa näe]
slow to read no

03 SUP: trögläst ble- blev det faktiskt
slowread is what it go- got actually

In example 4 the student, in line 2, shows involvement by adding a suggestion to the supervisor's previous utterance in a co-constructive way: *slow to read* ('trögt å läsa'). The supervisor accepts this suggestion by recycling it in similar wordings, *slowread* ('trögläst', line 3). By adding *it got actually* ('blev det faktiskt', line 3), the supervisor displays further acceptance of the student's suggestion, and strengthens her own previous assessment.

Example 5 illustrates a recycling where the student recycles the supervisor's words. Hence, the roles are reversed compared to example 4. Example 5 is from the beginning of a supervision meeting and starts with the student telling the supervisor that he will present his text at a seminar the day after tomorrow, and adding that he waits for the comments he will get there (lines 1–2, 6).

Example 5. Recycling a supervisor's formulation (Finland Swedish)

01 STU: i morgon ska jag eller i övermorgon ska jag presentera
tomorrow I'll or the day after tomorrow I'll present

02 [så jag väntar på (.) [opponeringens
so I await the opponent's

03 SUP: [okej ((nickar)) [okej ((nickar))
okay ((nods)) okay ((nods))

04 (0.5)

05 SUP: just [de
right

- 06 STU: [kommentarer å sånt så
comments and stuff so
- 07 SUP: jä så de e lite spännande [((skrattar, nickar))
yeah so it's a bit exciting ((laughs, nods))
- 08 STU: [de e lite spännande
it's a bit exciting
- 09 jä [att
yeah so
- 10 SUP: [jä (.) jä ((nickar))
yeah yeah ((nods))

During the student's turn, the supervisor shows active listenership and engagement through nods and the acknowledgment tokens *okay* and *right* ('okej', 'just de', lines 3 and 5). In line 7, the supervisor further displays empathy with the emotions involved in awaiting feedback on the text, saying that *it's a bit exciting* ('de e lite spännande'). The student shows agreement with the supervisor's interpretation and makes the words her own by recycling the same wordings in line 8, *it's a bit exciting* ('de e lite spännande').

Examples 4 and 5 illustrate how students and supervisors coordinate around a joint formulation, which, as Landqvist (2010, p. 186) notes, gives an impression of agreement and mutual understanding between the participants.

Telling second stories

Another way to construct collaboration in our data is to tell a second story. A second story can be described as a response formulated as a story, with a recognisable similarity to a previous story. By telling a second story, interlocutors show that they have had a similar experience, and demonstrate their understanding of the first story. The second story also shows that the recipient affiliates with the prior speaker (Sacks, 1992; Arminen, 2004).

In example 6, a supervisor gives a student advice on how to think and how to relate to the reader during the writing process. The student responds by telling a second story where she adds her own story on the same topic.

Example 6. Second story told by a student (Sweden Swedish)

- 01 SUP: jag brukar alltid säga liksom att man ska alltid utgå från
I always say well that you should always assume
- 02 att läsaren e *lite dum* å lite *lat* (((skrattar))
*that the reader is a *bit stupid* and a bit *lazy* ((laughs))*
- 03 STU: [mm
mm
- 04 STU: mm
mm
- 05 SUP: de e en bra utgångspunkt
that is a good starting point
- 06 STU: [preci- [ja:
exact- yes
- 07 SUP: [lite dummare å lite latare
a bit more stupid and a bit more lazy
- 08 än vad man tro:r att läsaren [är ((skrattar))
than what you believe that the reader is ((laughs))
- 09 STU: [ja
yes
- 10 (0.4)
- 11 STU: en eh en *e:h* som min sambo pluggade med sa också att
*someone eh someone *eh* whom my partner studied with also said that*
- 12 eh fast li- lite mindre politiskt korrekt att (.) utgå från
eh but a li- little bit less politically correct that (.) assume
- 13 att alla e idioter (((skrattar))
that they all are idiots ((laughs))
- 14 SUP: [aa
yeah

In example 6, the student does not only reuse the content but also the formulations that the previous speaker, the supervisor, has just used: *assume that* ('utgå från att', lines 1–2 and 12–13). Second stories are responses with a recognisable similarity to a previous story, in this case told by the supervisor. By telling a second story, the student claims and demonstrates understanding and also shows that she has had similar experiences as the supervisor. The student's second story also has relational implications in so far that it shows that she displays affiliation with the supervisor.

Doing collaborative writing

In the current section, we examine how collaboration between a student and a supervisor develops during a single encounter, and how the collaboration is sequentially organised in the temporally unfolding interaction. Example 7 illustrates how the student and the supervisor together contribute to the improvements of the student's abstract, and how the student's participation evolves during the encounter.

The example consists of two parts of a longer sequence, located in the middle of a single encounter. The first part (7a) begins after 5 minutes, and the second part (7b) about 3 minutes later. Just before the extract, the supervisor has made a suggestion concerning the student's text. The student answers minimally, with the particle *mm*, indicating a potential problem with the supervisor's suggestion. The supervisor continues with an alternative suggestion. The student then explicates that there is a problem with both suggestions, because they are not in line with the original text. What follows is a further discussion of a possible formulation.

Example 7a. Collaborative writing (Finnish)

- | | |
|--------|---|
| 01 SUP | .hhh mut sit sillon sä voisit sanoo sanoo sen ehkä
<i>.hhh but then you could say say it maybe</i> |
| 02 | sillee niinku sit suoraan siinä että (.) käsittelen
<i>like directly there that (.) I discuss</i> |
| 03 | (1.2) tarkastelen (.) e- erityisesti TERM1 öö öö niinkun
<i>(1.2) examine (.) especially TERM1 eh eh PRT</i> |
| 04 | teoriaosuudessa tarkastelen erityisesti TERM1
<i>in the theory part I examine especially the TERM1</i> |

- 05 STU: mm
mm
- 06 SUP: sitä koskevien lakiuudistusten kautta ((kääntää katseen opiskeliiaan))
in light of the legal reforms ((turns gaze towards student))
- 07 STU: nii joo
yeah yes
- 08 SUP: voisko olla näin ni sit se niinku .hh (1.0) ja sitte (.) sitte sä tässä (.) ku tää
could it be like this so it PRT .hh (1.0) and then (.) then you here (.) like this



Figure 1. Focus on text (line 8).

- 09 kappale alkas (.) e- tutkimukseni kohdistuessa vain pieneen ryhmään nuoria
chapter would begin (.) my research concerning only a small group of young people
- 10 ni sitte sä sanosit että (.) haast- ä niinkun (.) haastattelut (.) osoit- sen sijaan
so then you would say that (.) interv- PRT (.) interviews (.) sho- in spite of
- 11 tai t- tai niinku tavallaan tuot sen että et jos (.) sul on tämmönen
or or PRT in a way you introduce the fact that that if (.) you have a kind of
- 12 kaksjakonen .hh ni sitte se sitte sen (.) voit jotenki (---) (niinku) että
two-part .hh so then it then its (.) you can somehow (---) (PRT) that
- 13 STU: joo
yes
- 14 SUP: teorian (.) jäl- (.) niinku ei sun tarte sitä sanoo että jälkeen tai näin mutta siinä
theory (.) aft- (.) PRT you don't have to say that after or so but there

15 STU: *nihihihi*
 yebebes

16 SUP: silleen niinku että teorian ohella tai
 like that PRT that besides theory or

17 (1.0)



Figure 2. Thinking faces by the supervisor and the student (line 17).

18 STU: nii
 yes

19 SUP: tai varsinainen (.)
 or the actual (.)

20 STU: var(-) varsinainen tutkimukseni
 act(-) my actual study

21 SUP: varsinainen tutkimukseni ((opiskelija nyökkää))
 my actual study ((student nods))

22 STU: joo
 yes

23 SUP: kohdistuu vain pieneen ryhmään nuoria
 focuses on just a small group of young people

24 STU: joo
 yes

25 SUP: jotenki silleen sitte tuot sen
 somehow like that you introduce it

After the student has rejected the initial suggestions by explicating why they are problematic, the supervisor continues with new suggestions (lines 1–4, 6, 8–12). The student produces particle responses (lines 5, 7) without actively participating in the negotiation process, e.g. by producing alternative suggestions. The supervisor continues with more concrete suggestions (cf. *here* ‘tässä’, *this* ‘tää’, line 8), and at that moment, both participants are gazing at the text (figure 1). A moment later, in line 16, the supervisor makes a suggestion that ends with the particle *or* ‘tai’. After that, both participants lift their gazes from the text, and engage in what could be analysed as simultaneous thinking (see figure 2, line 17). During a moment of silence (line 17), both participants display a momentary lack of expertise.

Goodwin and Goodwin (1986) have found that participants engaging in word-searches often withdraw their gaze for a moment, and “produce a characteristic ‘thinking face’” (p. 57). In example 7a, the participants are searching for an appropriate formulation, and not a specific word. Furthermore, they are both engaging in the search process. This process is collaboratively constructed, and manifested in simultaneous thinking faces (figure 2).

After the observable thinking moment, the supervisor initiates a candidate formulation, starting with an adjective (line 19). The student picks up the supervisor’s incomplete candidate and adds a noun (line 20). The result is a collaboratively constructed noun phrase, which the supervisor then repeats (line 21). The student nods simultaneously when the supervisor produces the verbal turn, and then responds with *yes* ‘joo’ (line 22). Thus, the participants have managed to discover a formulation that is suitable as regards both language and subject matter. The simultaneous thinking seems to be a crucial moment, after which the student starts taking a more active role by continuing the turn that the supervisor has started.

In the second part of the example (7b), the student and the supervisor move on to larger linguistic units. They collaborate by co-constructing sentences that the supervisor writes down. Compared to the first part of the encounter, their roles are reversed. Thus far, the supervisor has made suggestions that the student has responded to, but now the student is the one who makes suggestions that the supervisor accepts. Just before the extract, the student has asked how to write about a specific term in the abstract, and what follows (line 1) is the answer to the question.

Example 7b. Collaborative writing (Finnish)

- 01 SUP: no sit sä voisit laittaa sen sillä taval että (.)
 well then you could put it like that (.)
- 02 haastattelujen (.) taustaksi tarkastelen erityisesti TERM1
 as background (.) for my interviews I discuss especially TERM1
- 03 (0.5)
- 04 STU: tai TERM2 [aikana (voisko olla)
 or during the TERM2 (could it be)
- 05 SUP: joo [to:si [hyvä
 yes very good
- 06 STU: joo joo
 yes yes
- 07 SUP: < TERM2 > ((kirjoittaa))
 < TERM2 > ((writes))
- 08 STU: aika[na
 during
- 09 SUP: [<aikana> ((kirjoittaa))
 <during> ((writes))
- 10 (.)
- 11 STU: laki
 law
- 12 SUP: lakiuudistusten (.) kautta
 through (.) law reforms
- 13 STU: joo
 yes

After the supervisor's response (lines 1–2), there is a brief pause (line 3), possibly indicating some sort of trouble. The student then takes the turn, and produces an alternative formulation. The student's turn (line 4) begins with the connective *or* 'tai', which indicates that what follows is an alternative to what the supervisor has suggested. The interrogative at the end of the turn *could it be* 'voisko olla' marks the turn as a tentative suggestion, and makes the supervisor's response relevant. The supervisor responds with a highly positive evaluation, *yes, very good* (line 5), and starts writing down the student's suggestion. Thus, the supervisor both evaluates the student's formulation positively and makes it tangible by writing it down. Hence, the student has now become the active participant who verbalises the new formulations, and the supervisor accepts and even writes them down on the paper.

In examples 7a and 7b, after the collaborative thinking illustrated in figure 2, the student starts making suggestions on how to improve the text. The example shows how the participation roles alter in the course of the encounter: First, the supervisor makes suggestions that the student responds to. Towards the end of the meeting, the student is the one making new suggestions that the supervisor evaluates positively, and even writes down. The collaborative thinking seems to be a crucial turning point.

Discussion

In this chapter, we have focused on collaborative actions in supervision meetings. A detailed analysis of the interplay between students and supervisors has given us a more nuanced perspective on supervision meetings than that provided by studies with primary focus on how supervisors and students give and receive advice. Supervision meetings are not only about supervisors sharing their knowledge and students receiving new insights. As the analyses highlight, there are many kinds of collaborative actions between students and supervisors. In the examples discussed, the relationship between the participants is dynamic. Thus, a clear-cut characterisation of the participants as experts and non-experts overly simplifies the picture of how the institutional roles are realised.

Our results show that there are various ways in which collaboration between students and supervisors is manifested. These include joint actions such as co-constructing utterances, recycling each other's formulations, reformulating advice, and producing second stories. Collaborative actions display that supervisors and students are working in the same direction,

which is a crucial part of a successful supervision meeting (cf. Landqvist, 2010, for a discussion on advice-giving in another institutional context).

Filling in a missing word during a word search is one form of collaborative problem solving, and of co-authorship of spoken discourse. Joint authorship and problem solving between the supervisor and the student also occur at the level of written discourse, as we saw in the last example where text production became a joint activity. The collaborative writing and text revision remind us of Svinhufvud's (2008) analysis of text seminars, where students typically do not limit their feedback to giving advice, but rather appear to approach each other's texts from the perspective of problem solving.

In our data, the supervisors are experts on language and academic writing, while the students are experts on their own subject matters and their own texts. Thus, the participants have different roles available during the interactions and this dynamic setting opens up a site for collaborative actions and mutual understanding between two individuals whose expertises complement each other.

Transcription symbols

(0.2)	Length of pause in seconds and tenths of seconds
(.)	Micro pause, shorter than 0.2 seconds
[Overlap begins
]	Overlap ends
°mm°	Soft voice
mm	Laughing voice
(mm)	Uncertain transcription
(---)	Unhearable
y <u>e</u> s	Emphasis
ye:s	Prolonged sound
.yes	Uttered with aspiration
.h	Audible inhalation
.hh/.hhh	Long audible inhalation
su-	Interrupted word
TERM	Anonymised word
PRT	Discourse particle with no obvious English equivalent
((laughs))	Comment

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